Abstract for 2004 UTC Apex Award
Presented by American Electric Power
Columbus, OH

INNOVATIVE ACTIONS AID COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS:

Quick-thinking utility comes to the rescue in a deep freeze

Presidents Day 2003 Ice Storm

Starting February 16, 2003, ice, sleet and snow storms devastated large areas of the Ohio Valley in southern Ohio, eastern Kentucky and southern West Virginia, a region served by American Electric Power (AEP). Ice-laden trees and limbs brought down electric transmission and distribution equipment and wrought widespread damage to many other public and private structures. Electric service was knocked out to more than 130,000 AEP customers.

Line mechanics and other AEP electric service personnel – 2,000 line mechanics alone were involved in service restoration within a week – began replacing more than 1,200 poles, 600 transformers as well as cross-arms, pins, insulators and service cable to individual customer locations. Also, a second storm struck February 22, bringing thunderstorms and tornado warnings and knocking out electric service in parts of West Virginia.

One of the hardest-hit areas was Portsmouth, Ohio, where ice buckled two communication towers supporting the city's emergency services two-way radio systems. Immediately, AEP used parts of its internal telecommunications infrastructure to help this city of 21,000 restore critical communications service to its employees and municipal officials. Without this assistance, public safety and service officials would have been unable to communicate smoothly together to aid their citizenry in a time of natural disaster.

AEP prepared tower and building space at its South Shore, Kentucky, telecommunications facility, enabling the city to restore its communications capability. AEP offered the space to Portsmouth and supported the municipal agencies by preparing the site to meet their needs. Furthermore, AEP allowed the city to maintain operations at the Kentucky site for several months at no charge while it rebuilt its own facilities.

In addition to helping Portsmouth restore service, AEP loaned the city 20 handheld 800-megahertz two-way radios to coordinate its storm recovery efforts. Because commercial cellular service was not available in many areas due to congestion, inoperable infrastructure or lack of coverage, AEP's 800 MHz trunked radio network provided a critical communications link to AEP crews and the City of Portsmouth. This made a significant difference in their recovery and restoration efforts.

In an interview for AEP's intranet news service, Kim Carver stated "We were very pleased that AEP was being such a good neighbor in our time of need." Ms. Carver is the director of the Scioto County Emergency Management Administration and stated that the police, fire, road crews, water works, flood defense and wastewater all used the communications system provided by AEP.

The Presidents' Day storm proved the value of an extensive private telecommunications infrastructure and the innovative response of a utility partner. The system enabled AEP to come to the aid of Portsmouth, Ohio, in time of crisis, working together to restore the community and ensure the continuity of services and public safety.

City of Portsmouth Antennas Mounted on AEP's South Shore Tower

Some of the Devastation Seen After the February, 2003 Storm

APPLICATION

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David B Trego — 2/7/05

(Signature) *(Date)*

NOTE: Please use one application form for each project you are submitting. Send it along with your project document and abstract to:

UTC – United Telecom Council
Attn: The UTC Apex Award
1901 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20006

****ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY UTC NO LATER THAN JANUARY 31, 2005.****